

Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

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R 071647Z JUL 76

FM AMCONSUL BELFAST

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1352

INFO AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNAVCOMMSTA LONDONDERRY

UNCLAS BELFAST 242

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK, EI

SUBJECT: REACTION TO PRIME MINISTER VISIT

1. PRIME MINISTER JAMES CALLAGHAN MADE UNANNOUNCED VISIT TO BELFAST JULY 5. VISIT, LASTING MOST OF DAY, WAS FIRST SINCE HE BECAME PRIME MINISTER. HE ATTENDED SECURITY REVIEW AT STORMONT, VISITED WITH SOLDIERS AND POLICE, WALKED THROUGH CITY CENTER, MET LEADERS FOUR MAIN CHURCHES, LUNCHEDED WITH WORKERS IN ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICES AND GAVE SEVERAL RADIO AND TV INTERVIEWS.

2. REACTION TO CALLAGHAN VISIT GENERALLY GOOD. HE ASSURED QUESTIONERS THAT BRITAIN HAD NO INTENTION OF PULLING OUT, EITHER IN THE SECURITY OR ECONOMIC SENSE. HE SAID WITHDRAWAL WAS A SUBJECT ONLY RAISED IN ULSTER AND THAT IT WAS NEVER DISCUSSED IN CABINET. LOYALIST PRESS AND SOME POLITICIANS IN EARLY REACTIONS VIEWED WITH SOME HOSTILITY CALLAGHAN REMARK THAT VIOLENCE WOULD CONTINUE UNTIL TWO COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN IRELAND RESOLVE DIFFERENCES: "ONLY YOU CAN DECIDE THAT YOU ARE GOING TO LIVE IN PEACE WITH EACH OTHER. THE PROBLEM IS IN YOUR HANDS." LOYALISTS WANT MORE DRASTIC POLICY TO CURB TERRORISM. IRISH NEWS (READERSHIP FROM MINORITY COMMUNITY) RECALLED THAT CALLAGHAN ORDERED ARMY INTO NORTHERN IRELAND IN 1969. BELFAST NEWS LETTER (INCREASINGLY MODERATE LOYALIST)

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REMEMBERED THAT IT WAS MR. CALLAGHAN WHO RECONSTITUTED ROYAL

ULSTER CONSTABULARY, ALLEGEDLY TO ITS DETRIMENT. IN SUM, PRIME
MINISTER VISIT PROBABLY MOST BENEFICIAL IN MORALE SENSE.
SPICER

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